

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved*  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Service, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.

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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 21-03-2011		2. REPORT TYPE Master of Military Studies Research Paper		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) September 2010 - April 2011	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  How can the United States counter China's growing influence in Africa through non-kinetic means?		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER N/A			
		5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A			
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A			
6. AUTHOR(S)  Major Michael J. Fitzgerald, USMC		5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A			
		5e. TASK NUMBER N/A			
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) N/A	
				11. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER N/A	
12. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES N/A					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:  a. REPORT Unclass		17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 40	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Marine Corps University / Command and Staff College	
b. ABSTRACT Unclass				19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code) (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)	
c. THIS PAGE Unclass					

*United States Marine Corps  
Command and Staff College  
Marine Corps University  
2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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TITLE

**How can the United States counter China's growing influence in Africa through non-kinetic means?**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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## Preface

The inspiration for this master's thesis came from two sources. The first one accrued in the summer of 1995 at the Rugby World Cup when Springbok Captain, François Pienaar raised the Webb Ellis Cup standing next to President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. I did not understand the significance of this event until I read John Carlin's book *Playing the Enemy*. President Nelson Mandela used the Rugby World Cup tournament to avoid a civil war and reconcile with the Afrikaners. The second muse was the book *Unrestricted Warfare* written by two Chinese colonels on how to defeat a world power. This book caused me to look at how China uses its influence throughout the world. Rather than focus on just China or Africa I combined these interests into this document.

I would like to thank my wife, whose support made this possible. She dedicated an enormous amount of time and energy supporting my efforts in writing this thesis. Her feedback was invaluable in reviewing and writing this work as it enabled me to develop several topics. She was able to balance the needs of our family while simultaneously writing her own master's thesis. Dr. Shibuya's, guidance and mentorship focused my efforts in important areas dealing with China and Africa. I am grateful for his patience in editing and reviewing this thesis, as it helped me build a logical argument. Like any good coach, he pushed me past my comfort zone to produce quality work. I would like to thank Stase Rodebaugh from the writing lab whose knowledge of grammar and style facilitated refining this product. Finally, I am extremely grateful to LtCol White for rescuing my thesis from a computer crash.

## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** How can the United States counter China's growing influence in Africa through non-kinetic means?

**Author:** Major Michael Fitzgerald, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** Successful American efforts in the Republic of South Africa will result in persuading African nations that the United States is a superior strategic partner to the People's Republic of China.

**Discussion:** China's influence throughout the world has been growing at a rapid rate since their economic reforms of 1978. China's economy has grown at an average of 8%, a year since the 1980s. The People's Republic of China (PRC) has engaged many African nations to obtain natural resources to sustain its economy. These engagements have been through diplomatic and military means. China's need for raw materials from African resources is in direct competition with the United States (US). Due to China's growing influence in Africa, the US must move to counter China's influence through diplomatic and military means. Many African nations have begun to view China's growing influence with resentment. The US conducts diplomatic and military relations in Africa with similar but different African reactions than those of the PRC. In order to counter China's growing influence in Sub-Saharan Africa through non-kinetic means the US must engage the Republic of South Africa (RSA) as a partner for change on the Africa. President Obama has identified the RSA as an emerging center of influence that promotes democratic ideals and stability in Africa. Both South Africa and America have common interest in creating stability in Africa through promoting democratic ideas, conflict resolution, and economic growth. The RSA will be instrumental in countering China's influence. This will be a partnership not an alliance between the US and South Africa.

**Conclusion:** Countering Chinese influence in Africa through non-kinetic means, requires the United States to cultivate a strategic partnership with the Republic of South Africa.

## **Introduction**

China's influence throughout the world has been growing rapidly since its economic reforms of 1978.<sup>1</sup> China's economy has grown at an average of 8% a year since the 1980s.<sup>2</sup> The People's Republic of China (PRC) requires natural resources to sustain its economy. This need has taken the PRC to Africa. The PRC's engagements in Africa have been through diplomatic and military means. China's need for raw materials from African resources is in direct competition with the United States (US). Due to China's growing influence in Africa, the US must move to counter China's influence through diplomatic and military means.

The US has become more involved in Africa since the George W. Bush Administration. The US government continues to work with many African nations to fight Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome/ Human Immunodeficiency Virus (AIDS/HIV), promote investment in local businesses, and encourage stability. The US looks to promote democratic principles on the African continent to create stability. The US government has acknowledged the strategic importance of Africa by creating a sixth Geographic Combatant Command, African Command (AFRICOM). Due to the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), the US military has increased cross training with African militaries to enhance their security and support stability in the region.

In order to counter China's growing influence in Sub-Saharan Africa through non-kinetic means, the US must engage the Republic of South Africa (RSA) as a partner for change in Africa. President Obama has identified the RSA as an emerging center of influence that promotes democratic ideals and stability in Africa.<sup>3</sup> The RSA will be instrumental in countering China's influence. Successful US efforts in the RSA will result in persuading African nations that the US is a superior strategic partner to the PRC.

This paper explains how the US can counter China's growing influence in Africa through non-kinetic means. It examines how the PRC engages African nations through diplomatic and

military means. Many African nations have begun to view China's growing influence with resentment. Both the US and China compete for African natural resources to sustain their economies. The paper concludes that the RSA will be crucial in countering China's influence in Africa for the US. Both South Africa and the US have a common interest in creating stability in Africa by promoting democratic ideas, conflict resolution, and economic growth.

### **Sub-Saharan Africa**

Africa separates into four main regions: North, Western, Eastern, and Southern Africa. The State department has placed the responsibility for North Africa under the Bureau of Near East Affairs Region, and the Sub-Saharan Africa (Western, Eastern, and Southern Africa) area falls under the Bureau of African Affairs.<sup>4</sup> (Refer to Appendix A for a map of the Sub-Saharan region.) The use of the term "Africa" will refer to the Sub-Saharan region of the African continent for the purpose of this paper.

### **China's Foreign Policy in Africa: Diplomatic**

Three items drive the current Chinese policy towards Africa: "diplomacy and support for Chinese policies in international affairs, search for resources, and new markets for Chinese products and services in tandem with creations of jobs."<sup>5</sup> The PRC's relationship with Africa began during the Cold War. African nations were critical in the PRC gaining control of China's seat in the United Nations (UN) from Taiwan in 1971.<sup>6</sup> Throughout the 1970's and 1980's the PRC focused on internal matters. Starting in the 1990's China began to look at Africa as a location to gain the raw materials necessary to allow the economy to grow.

One of the ways that China invests in countries is by making package deals. China will agree to invest capital into a factory with the condition that Chinese firms do a majority of the work.<sup>7</sup> Recently, Ghana's President John Atta Mills signed just such an arrangement with

Chinese President Hu Jintao to finance a US\$1.2 billion aluminum refinery.<sup>8</sup> This investment will help to diversify and stabilize the Ghanaian economy. Kaiser Aluminum, an American company, had a majority stake in one of Ghana's aluminum refineries, but decided to shift operations to other countries rather than modernize the facilities in Ghana. However, in 2002 and again in 2003, the Volta River Authority in Ghana reduced Kaiser Aluminum's power allocation.<sup>9</sup> Due to this reduction, Kaiser lowered its output and therefore found it uneconomical to continue to make aluminum in Ghana.<sup>10</sup> Ghanaians have viewed this as a typical American business move regardless of the justification Kaiser Aluminum gave.<sup>11</sup> This perception of the US business practice may explain why some African countries have collaborated with the PRC.

The PRC has increased investments in Africa from US\$1.5 billion in 1991 to US\$12.2 billion in 2006.<sup>12</sup> Chinese businesses have been willing to conduct business with all African nations. Many US companies are unwilling to operate in some African nations like Sudan and Chad due to political instability and possible sanctions by the US Government. When the US demands that authoritarian governments move towards democracy and human rights improvements, these governments choose to negotiate with the PRC instead. Nations like Sudan and Zimbabwe feel they can turn to the PRC for financial and military aid, as the PRC professes noninterference with a nation's internal policies.

The PRC support of African governments is not based on conditions "pertaining to specific political objectives or standards" (like economic openness, human rights, and democratic reforms) and therefore seen as "No Strings Attached."<sup>13</sup> The PRC states the internal policies of a country is not its concern and it will not interfere. This policy is attractive to many countries with human rights issues. China is willing to invest in nations with a history of human rights violations. Part of the reason the PRC works with these African nations is China's

growing domestic energy needs, but China also recognizes the attractiveness of its “No Strings” policy.

African nations that accept Chinese assistance must agree to two prime principles, the first is recognition of the “One China” belief and the second is mutual support when dealing with human rights issues.<sup>14</sup> The goal of “One China” drives PRC’s foreign policy of reducing diplomatic recognition for the Republic of China (Taiwan).<sup>15</sup> The PRC’s goal is Taiwan’s isolation in order to force them to reunify with the mainland. Nations that receive aid from China must not officially recognize Taiwan.<sup>16</sup> Since the 1990’s, six African nations have broken ties or downgraded diplomatic relations with Taiwan.<sup>17</sup> The Republic of South Africa is the most notable African country to reduce diplomatic ties with Taiwan.<sup>18</sup> A reason for South Africa downgrading diplomatic relations with Republic of China was the Taiwanese support for the apartheid government of South Africa.<sup>19</sup> US recognition of Taiwan could strain relations with the RSA if the PRC escalates efforts to force Taiwan to rejoin the mainland.<sup>20</sup>

The second PRC demand is mutual support in the international arena. In 1971, the PRC regained its seat at the UN with the aid of 26 votes (76 affirmative votes from the assembly) from African nations.<sup>21</sup> Chairman Mao Zedong credited African countries stating, “We were brought back into the United Nations by our black African friends.”<sup>22</sup> African nations often support the PRC efforts in defeating punitive UN proposals for solving human rights issues relating to China. From 1997 to 2007, eleven human rights proposals against China were defeated with the support from African nations in the UN.<sup>23</sup> Often China requires support from African nations when dealing with issues over Tibet. In 2008, the Ivory Coast, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Benin, and the Comoros Islands supported China in stopping riots in Tibet.<sup>24</sup>

The PRC claims not to interfere in internal matters; however, they have exercised diplomatic influence on more than one occasion. For example, China threatened Zambia with “retaliation if its citizens voted for a candidate seen in Beijing as unfriendly.”<sup>25</sup> The influence on the Zambian election is debatable, and some critics may view this as an example of China exerting its economic influence to meddle in internal politics. When China hosted the 2008 Summer Olympics, the PRC demanded that Sudan change its activities in the Darfur region to reduce the level of complaints calling the event “the Genocide Olympics.”<sup>26</sup> In 2008, China aided President Mugabe of Zimbabwe by providing weapons to put down a popular uprising.<sup>27</sup> In 2005 the United Kingdom (UK) wanted to lead a debate in the UN General assembly on the Zimbabwe’s government plans to eliminate slums.<sup>28</sup> This action by the UK could have led to sanctions, but due to China’s support of Zimbabwe, China was able to counter any possible sanctions in the Security Council.<sup>29</sup>

Beijing will be shifting national priorities due to their growing wealth gap, as this gap may endanger internal stability.<sup>30</sup> Out of the almost 1.3 billion people in the PRC, 468 million survive on less than US\$2 a day and over 150 million are living on US\$1 a day.<sup>31</sup> The National People’s Congress drew up the next Five Year Plan for China in the fall of 2010. One of the major issues addressed in the plan is “inclusive growth” by changing the focus of the budget from large state businesses back to the people.<sup>32</sup> This change in focus could mean a reduction in the investments the PRC makes in Africa. However, this may not include a military withdrawal from Africa.

### **China’s Foreign Policy in Africa: Military**

In 2003, Chinese firms were implicated in the smuggling of arms to three African nations that had restrictions on weapons sales.<sup>33</sup> China sells arms to Sudan and Zimbabwe in spite of

international condemnation. In 2004, The PRC sold US\$200 million worth of arms, vehicles, and fighters to the Zimbabwe government, defying sanctions imposed by the US and EU.<sup>34</sup> Sudan spends almost 80% of the US\$500 million it receives from selling oil to procure weapons and military equipment from the PRC. These weapons helped fight the rebels in Southern Sudan.<sup>35</sup> In 2005, the PRC financed building weapons factories for the Sudanese government.<sup>36</sup> In October 2010, the PRC attempted to block a UN report on the use of Chinese made arms in the Darfur region of Sudan in violation of UN sanctions.<sup>37</sup> The PRC was unsuccessful in their effort to have the report re-written or blocked due to “unconfirmed facts” later that month (October 2010).<sup>38</sup> While China’s critics could view this action by the PRC as an attempt to circumvent UN sanctions, the report also cited Israel, Chad, Russia, and Belarus for providing arms to Sudan.<sup>39</sup> These arms provided by Israel, Chad, Russia, and Belarus were used in Darfur; however, the Sudanese government signed an “end-user agreement” that arms would not be used in Darfur.<sup>40</sup>

The Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has soldiers deployed to Africa ranging from peacekeeping missions to guarding the oil pipeline in Southern Sudan.<sup>41</sup> In 2006, the PRC deployed approximately 4,000 PLA soldiers to the oil fields in Southern Sudan to protect China’s interest in the region.<sup>42</sup> When Sudan separates into two different countries, Beijing will court the new government of Southern Sudan to accept aid as well as to continue current oil contracts. In 2003, 725 soldiers, 42 medical personnel, and over 200 vehicles deployed to the continent on peacekeeping missions, most notably in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia.<sup>43</sup> The PLA troops sent to Liberia came with a condition that the Liberian government cut ties with Taiwan.<sup>44</sup> The PLA Navy has deployed many ships to the region to guard against threats like Somalia pirates and protect PRC flagged ships.<sup>45</sup>

Military to military exchanges are ways in which nations can form a long-term basis for friendship. The PLA is working with several other African nations to strengthen their bond with Beijing. Currently Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sudan have military collaboration, exchange, and training programs with the PRC.<sup>46</sup> The PLA is available to train these nations rather than the US, whose military is spread thin fighting the GWOT. However, the US will be increasing its training and educational programs with many African militaries including Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Liberia in 2011.<sup>47</sup>

### **Chinese's Foreign Policy in Africa: African Reaction**

Not all countries in the region view China as an investment opportunity, but rather the new face of colonialism. Former South African President Thebo Mbeki has told African national leaders they are “falling into a colonial relationship” with China.<sup>48</sup> A reason for President Mbeki’s reaction to China’s practices was the trade deficit South Africa had with China. In 2004, the South African trade deficient with China was US\$1.9 billion.<sup>49</sup> In 1993 50% of the RSA exports to The PRC were manufactured goods; by 2003, only 8% of exports were manufactured goods.<sup>50</sup> Most of South Africa’s exports (90%) to China are raw materials.<sup>51</sup>

Another reason for former Presidents Mbeki’s view of “a new colonial relationship” with China is due to the PRC’s business practices. African factories cannot compete with Chinese companies due to their low production costs and prices.<sup>52</sup> For example, South Africa’s textile industry was nearing collapse due to cheaper Chinese imports.<sup>53</sup> Labor unions in the RSA put pressure on the South African government to engage the World Trade Organization (WTO) to protect local manufactures.<sup>54</sup> Showing no remorse, a Chinese official stated, “Any move by the South African government to restrict textile imports from China would violate the WTO free

trade agreement.<sup>55</sup> South Africa is not the only country telling China that it cannot have its way in Africa.

Many nations that once allied with China have begun to reduce PRC aid and contracts. China planned to rebuild the Lobito to Zaire railway destroyed during the Angolan Civil War.<sup>56</sup> Angola canceled the US\$2 billion project in November 2007.<sup>57</sup> The reason for the cancellation was due to “high- level dispute” between the Angolan and Chinese governments.<sup>58</sup> A western diplomat in Angola stated, “The Chinese promised an awful lot, [and] the Angolans demanded an awful lot.”<sup>59</sup> Both nations failed to ground their expectation with realistic goals.<sup>60</sup> In 2008, Angola awarded a contract to build an oil refinery to the American firm Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR) instead of the competing Chinese firm.<sup>61</sup> The cancellation of the Lobito railway construction project and awarding oil refinery project to KBR are signs that they are moving away from China’s influence.<sup>62</sup> Zambia is another example of this distrust of China.

When a Chinese controlled copper mine exploded, killing 50 workers; the local community protested working conditions in the mine and ignoring basic safety measures is an example of the growing distrust.<sup>63</sup> A few months after the explosion, Chinese President Hu Jintao canceled a visit to Zambia for fear his appearance may cause workers to protest.<sup>64</sup> These examples show indications of growing resentment towards the PRC practices and influence in Africa. African nations have begun to view the Chinese promise not to interfere as hypocritical as the PRC has influenced internal policies of African nations when it is to China’s advantage.

### **US Foreign Policy in Africa: Diplomatic**

For the last 10 years, the US has focused on fighting the GWOT. The George W. Bush Administration decided to reduce possible safe zones for terrorist groups along with improving conditions in Africa. The Bush Administration focused on five areas: democracy building and

human rights, conflict mitigation, socioeconomic development, trade promotion and investment, and environmental protection/ management.<sup>65</sup> Another policy was the President's Emergency Plans For AIDS/HIV Relief (PEPFAR) in preventing and dealing with the AIDS/HIV crisis in Africa.<sup>66</sup> The creation of PEPFAR was one of the new building blocks for US commitment to Africa.

The Obama administration's focus has been on building "stability of democratic governments, supporting development that creates jobs, trade and investment promotion, strengthening public health and energy."<sup>67</sup> President Obama did not change the US government's policy towards Africa except further investment in the African Growth Act (AGOA). Under AGOA, the United States will allow African agricultural products easier access to the US.<sup>68</sup> The subsequent infusion of capital to African economies may increase investment in local businesses throughout the continent. Another foreign aid instrument is the Millennium Challenge Account that provides funding to local businesses.<sup>69</sup> In addition to diplomatic efforts, another way that the US engages African nations is through military means.

### **US Foreign Policy in Africa: Military**

The US established AFRICOM to focus US military efforts in the region. AFRICOM's emphasis is on prevention of conflict instead of direct military action in order to deny terrorists sanctuary in Africa.<sup>70</sup> Under previous administrations, Africa was the responsibility of European Command. The mission of AFRICOM is to work:

in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners, conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.<sup>71</sup>

AFRICOM signaled a unified effort in US military activities to prevent instability in Africa. AFRICOM is not located on the continent but in Stuttgart, Germany. If the US does not locate

AFRICOM headquarters on the continent, this may cause a perception that the US is interested in protecting access to natural resources and not bringing stability to the region. However, three out of six geographic combatant headquarters are not located in their areas of responsibility.<sup>72</sup> Central Command Headquarters is located in the US and not in the Middle East, its area responsibility. Many African nations do not want to have the headquarters located in their nation. This difficulty places the US with limited choices for a positive strategic message. Many African nations feel that AFRICOM will destabilize the region due to a possible “Cold War” between the PRC and US.<sup>73</sup> Other critics view AFRICOM as reducing the power of regional hegemones like Nigeria, Libya, and South Africa.<sup>74</sup> Another African concern is that AFRICOM is only protecting US access to oil, combating terrorism, and reducing Chinese influence in Africa.<sup>75</sup>

Part of the African opposition to the establishment of AFRICOM headquarters on the continent is that a large number of US troops stationed in Africa will cause an undue influence in the region.<sup>76</sup> Currently the US has approximately 1,500 troops of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa stationed in Djibouti conducting counter terrorism operations.<sup>77</sup> The US military has found that it is better to show the African nations how to enhance their security through military-to-military engagements as well as a whole of government approach. This helps both the US and African nations to understand each other and facilitate future military operations.

### **US Foreign Policy in Africa: African Reaction**

Many African nations view the US policy on the continent as having too many strings attached or not fully delivering on promises. The US often places conditions on aid in Africa that many leaders find unacceptable, like debt reduction, human rights progress, and financial reforms. A representative for the Kenyan Government stated, “You never hear the Chinese

saying that they will not finish a project because the government has not done enough to tackle corruption. If they are going to build a road, then it will be built.<sup>78</sup>

If the United States influence is to expand in Africa, it must change its hard line on certain issues and switch to a different tactic. An example would be how the State Department is conducting “engagement without illusions” instead of ignoring Iran.<sup>79</sup> The tactic of placing sanctions upon African nations has not quelled violence on the continent. Through engagement, the US can show African governments how to conduct business within acceptable international norms. If the US makes a promise that it will construct a key piece of infrastructure in an African nation, it must follow through with the promise. Africans view the US inability to keep promises as deceptive. Many Africans’ reaction to the presence of the US and China is based on the competition for natural resources.

### **Natural Resources Competition**

Africa is a vital area for both the US and China for energy needs, raw materials, and access to markets to sustain their national economies. Trade between Africa and the PRC was US\$24 billion in 2004 and grew to US\$32.7 billion in 2005.<sup>80</sup> In 2004, China imported almost US\$10.8 billion from African nations.<sup>81</sup> China’s main African trading partner is Angola (US\$3.4 billion) followed by RSA (US\$2.6 billion), Sudan (US\$1.7 billion), Congo (US\$1.2 billion), Guinea (US\$787 million), Gabon (US\$415 million), Nigeria (US\$372 million), and Chad (US\$148 million) in 2004.<sup>82</sup> The chief export of the nations listed is oil with the exception of South Africa. The Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe are China’s chief source for iron ore and platinum.<sup>83</sup>

The United States also imports many raw materials from Africa like copper, iron ore, diamonds, and gold. In 2009, the top US imports from Africa were oil (US\$71.2 billion),

platinum (US\$2.9 billion), motor vehicles and parts (US\$1.9 billion), diamonds (US\$1.5 billion), iron and steel (US\$1.2 billion), apparel (US\$1.1 billion), ores, slags, and ash (US\$896 million), cocoa (US\$695 million), organic chemicals (US\$627 million), and petroleum gases (US\$513 million).<sup>84</sup>

In 1970, China produced a sufficient amount of oil to cover domestic consumption.<sup>85</sup> By 2000, the PRC was importing 1.3 million barrels a day.<sup>86</sup> China imported 4.8 million barrels of oil a day in 2010; projected imports for 2030 are 11.4 million barrels of oil a day.<sup>87</sup> Oil producing African nations anticipate producing 7 million barrels of oil a day in the next 10-15 years.<sup>88</sup> In 2004, China imported 28.7% of its oil supply from Africa with Angola as its main supplier.<sup>89</sup> Angola supplied China with 117 million barrels of oil in 2004, second only to Saudi Arabia in supplying the Chinese market.<sup>90</sup> The Chinese oil company Petro China signed an US\$800 million agreement with Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to obtain 30,000 barrels of oil a day for 2005 totaling 10.95 million barrels of oil for the year.<sup>91</sup> In 2006, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation obtained a 45% controlling interest in a Nigerian oil field for US\$2.27 billion with another US\$2.25 billion invested in oil field development.<sup>92</sup> Sudan provides only 7% of China's oil needs.<sup>93</sup> China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) is the controlling shareholder of the Sudanese based Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC).<sup>94</sup> The CNPC have invested US\$3 billion in pipeline and refineries starting in 2006 with completion estimated in 2017.<sup>95</sup>

The expansion of African oil production is a result of heavy Chinese investment (US\$360 billion) in the region's oil industry.<sup>96</sup> China is the world's top producer and consumer of coal.<sup>97</sup> The PRC has become interested in methods to turn coal into oil. South Africa's Sasol Corporation is an industry leader in the coal to liquids technology.<sup>98</sup> In 2004, the Sasol

Corporation signed a letter of intent to study the feasibility of building coal to oil plants in China.<sup>99</sup> In 2008, China's National Development and Reform commission doubted the environmental and economic feasibility of the technology.<sup>100</sup> As of June 2010, the Chinese government has not approved the final stage of the Sasol project in the PRC, citing concerns over the amount of water used in the conversion process.<sup>101</sup> This level of investment will continue to fuel a growing African oil industry but will also help diversify China's oil import portfolio. The diversification would help the PRC deal with any potential disruption of oil along with market fluctuations. The PRC diversification of their oil portfolio will increase their influence in Africa. This influence is beginning to move beyond the natural resources in to the area of technology as evident in the PRC engaging Sasol to build coal to liquids technology.

Oil producing African nations are also key partners for the US. African nations provided an average of 1.45 million barrels of oil a day to America in 2010.<sup>102</sup> Nigeria is the United States largest African supplier of oil and fourth overall behind Canada, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia, averaging 986 thousand barrels a day.<sup>103</sup> Angola is America's seventh supplier of crude oil averaging 380 thousand barrels of crude oil daily in 2010.<sup>104</sup> Gabon is a small but an important producer of crude oil for the United States averaging 51,000 barrels a day during 2010.<sup>105</sup>

### **How Should the US Counter China's Influence in Africa**

The competition for natural resources will lead both the US and the PRC to build partnerships with African nations. Some African nations view US aid as more trouble than it is worth when compared to Chinese aid. America must seek a partnership, not an alliance with the RSA to counter growing Chinese influence on the continent. The reason for the partnership and not an alliance is that the RSA is a peer leader in the developing world. An alliance would

diminish the RSA credibility amongst developing nations. South Africa and the US have mutual interests in creating a stable African continent. Since 2003, America's perception, and influence on Africa have changed due to the GWOT. Additionally the competition for natural resources in Africa has increased, requiring the US to change diplomatic methods.

## **South Africa**

One of the strongest negative reactions to US foreign policy came from South Africa's African National Congress (ANC). The ANC is the most powerful political party in South Africa. During the President George W. Bush tenure, the relationship between the US and RSA was strained due to the Bush Administration's "unilateralism and undermining of global multilateral institutions."<sup>106</sup> When the US announced the founding of AFRICOM, the ANC's reaction was immediate, calling "Africa to remain united and resolute in the rejection of AFRICOM."<sup>107</sup> The ANC viewed the command as the "Latest American design to interfere in continental affairs."<sup>108</sup>

Under President Obama, the US relationship with the RSA has gone from "strained to sound."<sup>109</sup> The Obama Administration has sought to rebuild a relationship with South Africa through engagements instead of the Bush Administration's "unilateralism."<sup>110</sup> The port visit of the *USS Arleigh Burke* (guided missile destroyer) in Durban, South Africa during July 2009 is evidence of this renewed friendship.<sup>111</sup> The US hosted a bilateral defense committee conference in July 2009 presents another indicator of renewed relations.<sup>112</sup> As part of the renewed friendship, General Garrett, US Army Africa commander, visited South African Defence Forces in March 2010.<sup>113</sup> Under President Obama, the US provided approximately US\$317 million to the RSA to fight AIDS/HIV in 2009.<sup>114</sup> The US and RSA signed a new PEPFAR agreement in

December 2010.<sup>115</sup> This is a five-year plan for the US to move from emergency service delivery to building the South African ability to fight AIDS/HIV.<sup>116</sup>

As a regional power, the RSA can help the US in countering China's growing influence in Africa. President Obama has identified the RSA as an Emerging Center of Influence "due to their economic growth, political stability, regional and global role."<sup>117</sup> The RSA and the US have common interests in Africa like conflict resolution, economic development, and promoting democratic ideas.<sup>118</sup> The US must show South Africa their best interest is in working with America. The US must understand and accept when the RSA does not agree with America's actions. South Africa must maintain their peer leadership role in order to deal with other developing nations.

The RSA is a good choice as a strategic partner in Africa for several reasons. First, South Africa is a peer leader amongst developing nations as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The RSA maintains their peer leadership role amongst developing nations by not having an alliance with or showing favoritism to the US or China on regional and international issues. South Africa has criticized China and America on issues that affect developing nations there by appearing to be unbiased. This gives the RSA the appearance of credibility in Africa and internationally.

The US can engage the RSA in a partnership in Africa in order to bring stability and development to the continent: a goal of both nations. The stability will allow US firms to obtain natural resources and manufactured goods from Africa over the long-term, and provide investment capital to African nations. The investment capital will allow African nations to create the conditions for sustained development thus reducing their dependence on foreign nations. China's main interest in Africa is obtaining natural resources to sustain the Chinese

economy.<sup>119</sup> The US goals of creating stability in Africa are in line with the RSA goals.

Secondly, the RSA is one of the US' leading trading partners in Africa, so economic ties between the US and RSA are strong. The RSA can aid America in convincing other African nations the US is the best partner for long-term economic growth and stability in the region.

South Africa's foreign policy in Africa focuses on six areas, the fight against poverty and underdevelopment, peace and peaceful resolution in conflicts, peacekeeping, partnership, building and reforming institutions on the continent, and ensuring influence on global political issues.<sup>120</sup> The RSA uses their position as a NAM member to criticize both the PRC and US. The South African government has called for the end of the US-led embargo of Cuba.<sup>121</sup> Pretoria also has diplomatic ties and business dealing with the Iranian government dating back to 1995.<sup>122</sup> South Africa has warned other nations against having a colonial relationship with China.<sup>123</sup>

Another reason that the US should foster a partnership with the RSA is they are a democratic nation that peacefully transitioned from the minority rule to a democratically elected government through peaceful means.<sup>124</sup> Former RSA President Mandela and the ANC fought for years against apartheid. When the change of government came, President Mandela reconciled with the Afrikaner minority to avoid a civil war and bring stability to the country.<sup>125</sup> The RSA has been instrumental in ending conflicts on the African continent, most notably in Congo.<sup>126</sup> Since 1994, the world community has held South Africa in high esteem not just for their peaceful transition of power, but also their involvement in international affairs.<sup>127</sup>

### **US Trade With South Africa**

During 2008, US businesses invested US\$4.8 billion in the RSA.<sup>128</sup> In 2009, the US conducted approximately US\$10.4 billion in trade with the RSA.<sup>129</sup> The RSA is one of the leading trading partners of the US on the continent, with total trade worth 10.4 billion conducted

in 2009.<sup>130</sup> Most of the items exported from the US to South Africa are heavy equipment and parts to support the South African mining industry.<sup>131</sup> South Africa's mining operations provide a significant amount of raw materials to US industry. America industry imported mainly mining metals, minerals, medium sized automobiles, and engines.<sup>132</sup> By comparison, China has invested US\$6.1 billion in South Africa from 2005 to 2010.<sup>133</sup> The difference in trade between China and the US in trade with the RSA is America imports manufactured goods like medium size automobiles (US\$699.2 million) and small car engines (US\$618.9 million).<sup>134</sup> The PRC main imports from RSA are raw materials not manufactured goods.

### **South Africa: Rare Earth Elements**

China currently controls 97% of Rare Earth Elements (REE) required to make electronic equipment and devices.<sup>135</sup> REE are:

a class of minerals with similarly unique physical and chemical properties, including yttrium, lanthanum, neodymium, samarium, and europium. These minerals are not actually rare in nature; however, they are found in such small concentrations that extensive, precise processes are required to spate these minerals. Because [sic] of their unique properties – for example, some retain magnetism at extreme temperatures.<sup>136</sup>

REE are critical in the manufacturing of electronic devices in particular sophisticated computer circuit boards for cell phones, computers, control systems for precision guide munitions, and night vision goggles.<sup>137</sup> South Africa also has the potential to provide REE to the US, thus reducing our dependency on the PRC. US investment in REE mine could increase the trade between the US and the RSA.

In 2010, the PRC announced that the management of REE in China would come under control of the national planning authority instead of local authorities.<sup>138</sup> The PRC cited concerns over illegal mining and environmental impacts as the main reason for centralized control of REE in China.<sup>139</sup> China has reduced export quotas and increased export taxes on REE, thereby

affecting US technology businesses.<sup>140</sup> A draft report produced by China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology requested that all REE shipments destined for foreign shores stop in order to maintain sufficient quantities for domestic consumption.<sup>141</sup> The PRC has begun to protect their REE resources because at the current rate of mining China will have exhausted the minerals in 35 years.<sup>142</sup> The PRC is willing to sell REE in a finished form instead.<sup>143</sup> South Africa has significant deposits of REE. By China restricting REE exports, this will financially justify opening and expanding existing mines in the RSA.

New REE mines in South Africa could be operational by 2014.<sup>144</sup> Expanding operations at the Steenkempskal mine in South Africa could decrease US dependence on Chinese sources in the near term.<sup>145</sup> The United States should encourage the South African government and companies to expand the mines required in order to counter the current Chinese monopoly. The US military Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) can award multi-year contracts with South African firms to mine the elements.<sup>146</sup> These REE mining contracts should have stipulations that a Chinese firm cannot have a subcontract or be involved with the operation.

Currently DLA does not stockpile REE in the Strategic War Reserves and would need Congress to authorize such an action.<sup>147</sup> The Office of the Secretary of Defense is currently looking at the possibility of holding REE in the Strategic War Reserves.<sup>148</sup> DLA would stockpile the REE in the Strategic War Reserves to safe guard against any future actions of the PRC to limit access to these key materials. Additionally, the US government can subsidize American companies to train South African firms in mining techniques to extract the rare earth elements. The American government can provide tax breaks and subsidies to US manufactures of REE mining equipment to sell this equipment to South African companies.

### **Other Recommendations**

Military-to-military training should be enhanced by adding South African military officers to US professional military education schools like the Marine Corps Command and Staff College. Ideally, a one for one exchange of military students would take place on an annual basis like the one between the UK Royal Marines and the US Marine Corps. This consistent exchange would allow the US to have a greater understanding of how developing nations operate their military and the nation's culture. The State Department can fund the students through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. The purpose of IMET:

is an instrument of U.S. national security and foreign policy and a key component of U.S. security assistance by providing training on a grant basis to students from allied and friendly nations. In addition to improving defense capabilities and contributing to the professionalization of foreign militaries, IMET facilitates the development of important relationships that have proven useful in providing U.S. access and influence in a critical sector of society that often plays a pivotal role in supporting or transitioning to democratic governments.<sup>149</sup>

The RSA was budgeted for US\$850,000 in 2010 with a projected budget of US\$865,000 for 2011 for the IMET program.<sup>150</sup> The IMET program has a budget of US\$15.2 million for 2010 and anticipated budget of US\$15.9 million for 2011 for African nations.<sup>151</sup> There is only one student from an African nation, Tanzania, at Marine Corps Command and Staff College during academic year 2010-2011. In the past year, Marine Corps University has had an increase in the number of African nations attending the Basic Officers Course.<sup>152</sup> Marine Corps University records show that one South African Soldier attended the Advanced Staff Non-Commission Officer's course in 2010.<sup>153</sup> The last South African Officer to attend a course at Marine Corps University was in 2002 for the Basic Officer's Course.<sup>154</sup> The Marine Corps offered a school seat to the RSA for Expeditionary Warfare School for academic year 2010-2011 but they were "unable to provide a fill for this course."<sup>155</sup> If the US is to have a true partnership

with the RSA, the US should have at least one spot per class in advanced military schools for South Africans.

### **What the US can learn from the RSA**

South Africa should be the main effort of a renewed American presence, but this does not mean they should be the sole focus. This initial stage will show Africa the US has changed their aid policies. The United States will help African nations to deal with their problems. Africans must solve their problems in an African fashion for long-term results. South Africa can show other African nations the mutual benefits of a positive relationship with the US. This would be a partnership to create a stable Africa, not an alliance. By working with the South African government, the US will also learn the basic principles of how to negotiate with other African nations.

Once the US has established credibility with South Africa, only then should the US move to help other African nations in the same fashion. The RSA will act as a positive example to African nations. All nations understand that aid does not come without requirements, but the US will help in dealing with their stipulations instead of Chinese influence in internal matters.

### **Conclusion**

China's influence in the world has risen since their economic reforms of 1978.<sup>156</sup> The Africa continent has received a significant amount of Chinese capital and aid. Much of the capital has been to obtain raw materials to sustain Chinese industry. The PRC's foreign policies are influencing many African nations. This influence is in direct competition with American business and national interests.

The US has recognized the importance of the African continent both in economic and military terms. This recognition brought about a new geographic combatant command for the

US. The US government has also contributed aid to battle AIDS/HIV in Africa. The Obama Administration has sought closer ties with African nations to help bring stability to the continent. Since 2009, President Obama has repaired the US relationship with the RSA. South Africa can help the US counter growing Chinese influence in the region. The US will have to gain the trust of the RSA by investing in industry and education. The American military must engage African militaries to increase stability and security on the continent.

Countering Chinese influence in Africa through non-kinetic means requires the US to cultivate a strategic partnership with the RSA. This partnership can facilitate change on the continent that benefits both Africans and Americans. South Africa is critical to opposing Chinese influence. Successful US efforts in RSA will result in persuading African nations that the US is a superior strategic partner than the PRC.

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<sup>93</sup> Brookes and Ji. 3

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Top US Exports to South Africa

1. Civilian aircraft and parts: US\$323.7 million
2. Dump trucks: US\$73.8 million
3. Calcined petroleum coke: US\$72.9 million
4. Tunneling machinery parts including rock cutters: US\$57.2 million
5. Carbon black feedstock: US\$51.6 million
6. Reception and transmission equipment: US\$51.1 million
7. Bituminous coal: US\$46.6 million
8. Road tractors for semi-trailers: US\$45.58 million
9. Vehicle parts and accessories: US\$41.7 million
10. Small automobiles: US\$38.6 million

Top US Imports from South Africa

1. Platinum sponge: US\$767.7 million
2. Medium-size automobiles: US\$699.2 million
3. Medium-size automobiles, smaller engine: US\$618.9 million
4. Non-industrial diamonds, processed: US\$533.2 million
5. Rhodium: US\$345.3 million
6. Palladium: US\$166 million
7. Unsaturated acyclic hydrocarbons: US\$117.2 million
8. Slag over 40% titanium: US\$115.1 million
9. Non-industrial diamonds, unworked: US\$112.3 million
10. Ferrochromium over 4% carbon: US\$96.1 million

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<sup>147</sup> Lough. "Rare Earth Elements in Strategic War Reserves."

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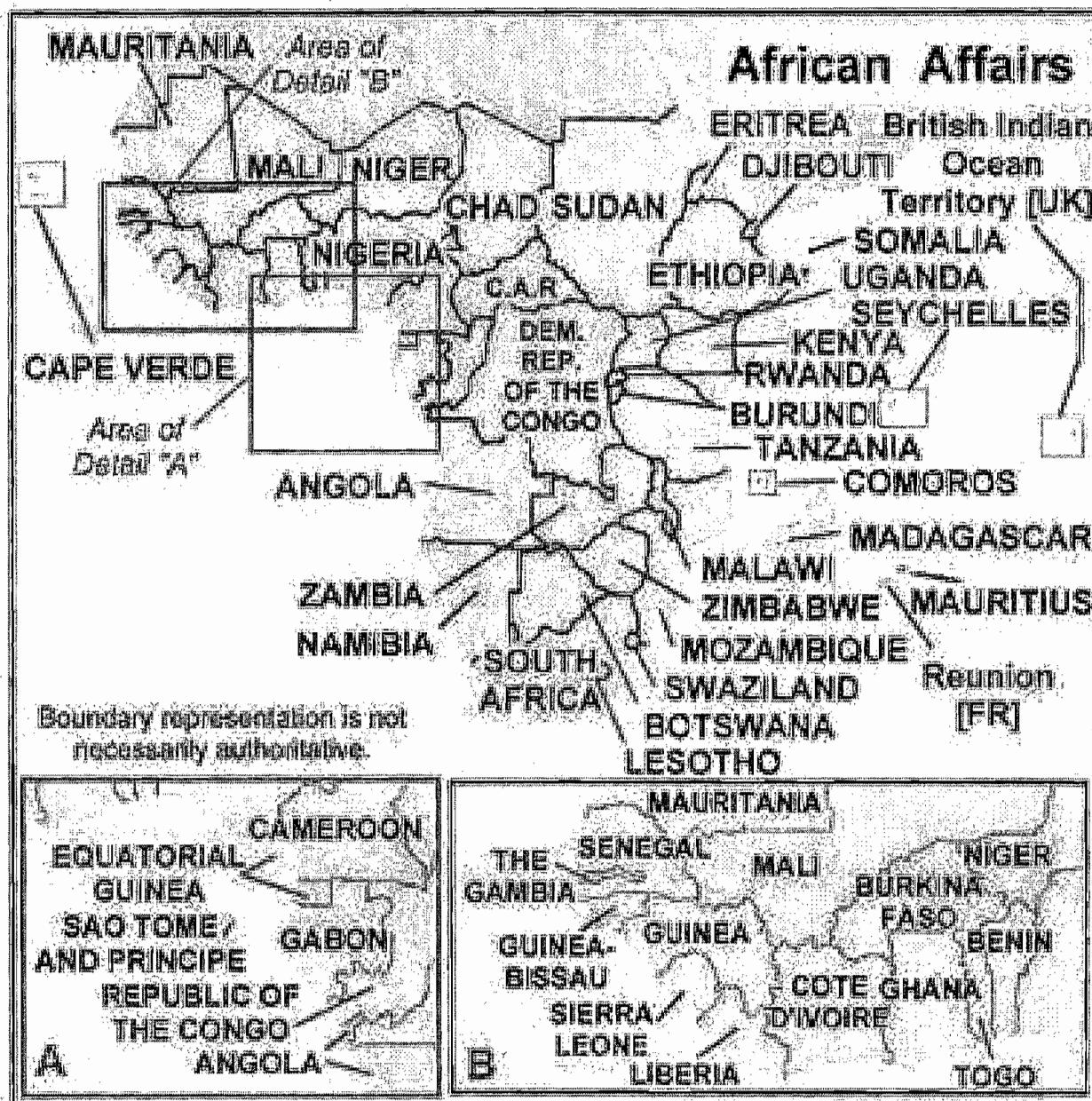
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## Appendix A



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